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THE CLAIMS:

1. A method of roll forming a metal section from sheet metal strip comprising of the steps of;
  - 5 differentially stretching the metal strip in its longitudinal direction so that at least one portion of the metal strip is more elongated than a laterally adjacent portion of the strip;
  - 10 roll forming the differentially stretched metal strip to form a profiled section; and
  - bending the profiled section so as to introduce a longitudinal precamber in the profiled section.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the metal strip is differentially stretched continuously in a longitudinal direction of the metal strip, so as to produce longitudinally extending elongated portions in the metal strip.
- 15 3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein portions of the metal strip shorten longitudinally in forming the profiled section and the metal strip is differentially stretched so as to compensate for the longitudinal shortening of the strip in roll forming the profiled section.
- 20 4. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein in bending the profiled section to introduce the longitudinal precamber, the metal of the profiled section is stretched, and wherein the metal strip is differentially stretched in portions that facilitate the stretching of the metal in the profiled sections during the step of bending of the profiled section.
- 25 5. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the profiled section is of a generally C-shape having a pan section and upturned edge margins which extend from one face of the strip, and wherein the profiled section is bent about the face opposite to that in which the upturned edge margins of the profiled section extend.
- 30 6. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein

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the metal strip is roll formed so as to be differentially stretched.

7. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the profiled section is caused to bend about a fulcrum to  
5 introduce the longitudinal precamber.

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the profiled section is restrained upstream of the fulcrum, and is loaded downstream of the fulcrum to induce bending of the profiled section about the fulcrum.

10 9. An apparatus for forming a metal section from sheet metal strip, the apparatus comprising;

stretching apparatus which is operative to differentially stretch the metal strip in its longitudinal direction so that at least one portion of the metal strip  
15 is more elongated than a laterally adjacent portion of the strip;

roll forming apparatus operative to roll form the differentially stretched strip to form a profiled section; and

20 bending apparatus operative to bend the profiled section so as to introduce a longitudinal precamber in the profiled section.

10. A forming apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the stretching apparatus includes at least one roll which is  
25 operative to engage a portion of the metal strip so as to elongate the engaged portion of the strip.

11. A forming apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the roll has a tapered surface so as to vary the amount of stretching across said engaged portion of the metal strip.

30 12. A forming apparatus according to any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein the bending apparatus comprises a multiple stage device which is operative to introduce a three point bend to said profiled section.

13. A forming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein  
35 the bending apparatus includes a reaction stage operative to restrain the metal profile, a fulcrum stage about which the profiled section bends, and an action stage which is

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operative to induce a load on said profiled section so as to induce bending of the profiled section about the fulcrum stage.

14. A forming apparatus according to claim 13, wherein 5 the action stage is adjustable in height relative to the fulcrum stage so as to enable the amount of precamber introduced into the profiled section to be varied.

15. A forming apparatus according to claim 13 or 14, 10 wherein the action stage is incorporated as part of the shearing assembly which is operative to cut said profiled section in discrete lengths.

16. A forming apparatus according to claim 15, wherein 15 the shearing assembly comprises a shearing block operative to receive the profiled metal section, and a cutting element which is moveable relative to the shearing block, wherein the shearing assembly and the action stage are mounted to a common assembly frame which is height adjustable.

17. A forming apparatus according to claim 16, wherein 20 the cutting element is mounted to the frame so as to allow for angular adjustment of the cutting element relative to the frame.

18. A shearing assembly for use in cutting a profiled metal section into discrete lengths, the shearing assembly 25 comprising an assembly frame, a shearing block attached to the frame and operative to receive the profiled metal section, and a cutting element which is moveable relative to the shearing block, wherein the shearing assembly is height adjustable so that the relative height of the 30 shearing block can be adjusted, and wherein the angle of the cutting element relative to the frame can be adjusted.

19. A shearing assembly according to claim 18, wherein the cutting element is pivotally mounted to the assembly frame.

35 20. A shearing assembly according to either claims 18 or 19, wherein the angle of both the cutting element and the shearing block relative to the frame can be adjusted.

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21. A shearing assembly according to claim 20, wherein the cutting element and shearing block are mounted to a common sub-frame pivotally mounted to the assembly frame.